



WHY WASTE REDUCTION IS IMPORTANT

All the products you buy, or at least their packaging or containers, will eventually require disposal. Packaging now accounts for 64 million tons by weight or 33% of all our garbage. If each person reduced waste by only 1 pound each week, the amount of reduction statewide would total 312,000 tons a year.

The family who reduces waste in the home helps protect the environment. Waste reduction is as important as recycling in saving natural resources, energy, and disposal space and costs, and in reducing pollution risks. Careful buying and disposal habits can also stretch the family budget.

WHAT IS WASTE REDUCTION?

Waste reduction refers to:

1. Reducing the amount of waste produced. An example is using china and silverware instead of using disposable paper plates and plastic flatware.
2. Reducing toxic substances in waste. An example is using a nontoxic oven cleaner instead of one that contains hazardous ingredients.

STARTING A REDUCING PROGRAM

The best way to discover where you can reduce waste is to actually sort through your trash. What does each family member throw away? What materials take up the most space? Is anything reusable or repairable? Can you reduce the amount of disposable products you use? Can you substitute products and packaging made of reusable, recyclable, or nonhazardous materials? If you are throwing away unusable leftover products, can you give them to someone else, or buy these things in smaller sizes?

WATCH WHAT YOU BUY

Waste reduction starts at the shopping center. When you go shopping follow these guidelines:

- ***Buy durable products*** instead of those that are disposable or cheaply made.
- ***Repair/restore used items*** before replacing them.
- ***Buy items you can re-use.*** Re-using margarine tubs to freeze foods or pack lunches, for instance, reduces the need for foil or plastic wrap.
- ***Buy items you can recycle locally*** through the City's recycling center.
- ***Avoid excess packaging*** when choosing product brands. Buy products in bulk. Buy just the amount you need: larger sizes reduce the amount of packaging, but smaller sizes reduce leftover waste.

MORE WASTE REDUCTION TIPS

Buy only what you need. Avoid impulse buying. Not only will you end up with something you can't use and have to throw away, but it will also be very expensive. One way to avoid this is to make a shopping list of what you need, then stick to that list.

Other tips:

- Put paper towels out of easy reach so they will be used only when needed. Set up a countertop or wall holder for sponges, rags and cloth towels.
- Buy beverages in returnable or recyclable containers. Most beverages are packaged in recyclable materials, which include glass, plastic milk and water jugs (HPDE), plastic soda bottles (PET), and aluminum.
- Buy concentrated products to reduce packaging. Examples are concentrated fruit juice, laundry detergent, fabric softener and window cleaner.
- Avoid buying packaged foods with disposable, nonreheatable microwave dishes. If you must buy them, the dishes can be re-used as picnic plates, plant saucers or pet dishes.
- If your favorite brands have excessive packaging or are not as durable as they should be, contact the manufacturers and express your concern about reducing waste and conserving natural resources.
- Carry a canvas or net tote bag when you shop. It's not only a safe, convenient way to carry purchases, it eliminates the need for the merchants' disposable paper or plastic bags.
- Too much junk mail? Contact the [Mail Preference Service](#), Direct Marketing Association.
- If you receive mail from a marketer who does not subscribe to the Mail Preference Service, write directly to the company to remove your name. Enclose an address label from previously sent mail; the coding on the label will help the company locate your name on their list.

- Letters and other correspondence that are printed on one side only can be cut along the folds and re-used to make shopping lists.
- Cancel subscriptions to magazines or newspapers you don't actually read, especially if you could read them at the local library. Give old issues to friends, co-workers, nursing homes, laundromats or libraries.
- Buy products that are durable, well-made and repairable. Check warranties, repair services and availability of parts and accessories. Read consumer magazines (your library probably carries copies) to learn which products are more durable and have longer warranties.
- Use carpools or public transit to extend the wear of cars and tires and reduce car maintenance wastes such as used oil.
- Reduce toxic waste by purchasing paints, pesticides and other hazardous materials only in the quantities needed, or by sharing leftovers.
- Use plug-in appliances instead of those that operate on batteries. Disposable batteries are discarded after one use. Rechargeable batteries are the largest source of cadmium in the municipal waste stream.
- Americans throw away about 2.5 billion disposable razors every year. Use an electric shaver or a quality razor with replaceable blades.
- Bar soap generates less packaging waste and is less expensive than liquid soap in plastic bottles with pump dispensers.
- Take proper care of shoes and clothing and repair them to extend use.
- Don't discard usable clothing or household items. Hold a yard sale or donate the items to charitable organizations. Worn clothing and other textiles can be used as rags or for craft projects.
- List all the things you can recycle through the city's local recycling center. Then list the things in your trash that are nonrecyclable. Next time you go shopping, look for recyclable substitutes.